for Manufacture, Use, Import/Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/ Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells". The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) has been constituted for approval of activities involving large scale use of hazardous microorganisms and recombinants in research and industrial production as well as approval of proposals relating to release of Genetically Engineered Organisms and products into the environment including experimental field trials. With a view to synergise the efforts and activities of the relevant Ministries/Departments and maintain effective coordination and implementation of the existing policy, an inter-Ministerial Meeting on G.M. Crop/ Food Policy was held in the Ministry of Environment and Forests on 26th February, 2003, in which it was decided to constitute a smaller working group with representatives from the relevant Ministries/Departments to address these issues.

(e) and (f) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee under the Ministry of Environment and Forests is responsible for the approval of proposals relating to release of genetically engineered organisms & products, including GM food into the environment.

Excess potato problem of UP

5148. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government are aware that the Central Uttar Pradesh has a bumper 102 lakh tonnes production of potatoes this year;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that the potato farmers in Central Uttar Pradesh are devastated because neither NAFED nor the State Government have come forward to buy the potatoes inspite of assurance given earlier; and

(c) the action Government propose to take to prevent the wastage of potato?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE-MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) Yes Sir. The State Govt. has reported 102 lakh tonnes production of potato in the State of Uttar Pradesh.

(b) In view of the bumper harvest of potato in UP and on the request of State Govt., the Government of India sanctioned Market Intervention Scheme for procurement of 1.00 lakh MTs FAQ potato to safeguard the interest of potato growers in UP. Out of one lakh MTs, 50,000 MTs were to be procured by NAFED and the remaining 50,000 MTs by State designated agencies. NAFED has procured 7,340 quintals of potato and the State nominated agencies have procured of 1,515 quintals. Besides, NAFED has also purchased 12,280 quintals potato and 2,230 quintals potato seed under their normal business operations.

(c) Besides, implementation of the Market Intervention Scheme, Government of UP is providing transport subsidy to facilitate the transport of potatoes to other States and for exporting potato to other Countries. It has also been reported that the State Govt. of Uttar Pradesh in association with Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) has initiated steps to tie up marketing arrangements for export of potato. Potato have also been stored in cold storages to prevent wastage. Govt. of Uttar Pradesh has also initiated setting up a processing unit for potato in Agra.

Promotion of organic farming in Karnataka

5149. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) what are the steps taken so far, by Government to promote organic farming in Karnataka;

(b) whether it has come to the notice of Government that there has been great demand for organic manure in Karnataka; and

(c) if so, the steps proposed to be taken to provide financial assistance to Karnataka under the National Project on Organic Farming during the Tenth Five Year Plan ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV) : (a) During the X Plan, a new scheme, 'National Project on Organic Farming' with an outlay of Rs. 99.58 crores is under process for approval which includes setting up of a National Institute of Organic Farming, for production and promotion of organic farming in the country. One of the Regional Biofertilizer Development Centre located at Bangalore, is proposed to be renamed as Regional Organic Farming Centre (ROFC) to promote organic farming in Southern States. The scheme envisages *inter-alia* the following :

- Putting in place a system of certification of organic produce including prescribing National Standards of organic farming.
- Capacity building for organic farming.
- Support for commercial production units of organic inputs like fruits and vegetables waste compost units, biofertilizer production units and hatcheries for vermiculture.
- Promotion and extension of organic farming.

(b) The demand for organic manure is increasing in all the States including Karnataka for/promoting organic farming and integrated nutrient management for maintaining Soil Health and Fertility.